



## WORLD VIEW

*Bangladeshi writer K Anis Ahmed's first novel, **The World In My Hands**, examines the new paradox of the Third World – growth and prosperity amidst persistent instability and violence*

**ELLE:** Which of your two protagonists are you more like? Disgruntled newspaper editor Hissam or wealthy entrepreneur Kaiser?

**K Anis Ahmed:** I'm a bit of all of them; not just the men, but also Natasha [Kaiser's wife]. I can relate to Kaiser's disdain for shoddy behaviour and Hissam's angst at the victories of the undeserving. Most of all, though, I relate to Natasha's quiet, deep determination to fight for what she believes is rightfully hers.

**ELLE:** Politics, flawed relationships and how they're helpless against external forces seem to be recurring themes in your writing.

**KAA:** Yes, they're themes that have fascinated me since my twenties. The novel also explores ambition and its price.

**ELLE:** How has the transition from short stories (*Good Night, Mr. Kissinger*, 2012) to the novel been? Which form are you partial to?

**KAA:** In my case, it was a gradual and very helpful transition. I wrote the longest stories in *Good Night, Mr. Kissinger* last, and by the time I finished them,

I felt quite ready for the long form. I want to explore the novel some more. Recently, I did a micro-fiction series, and even turned a few of those pieces into graphic fiction with the help of a terrific young Dhaka artist.

**ELLE:** Where is Bangladeshi English literature at, according to you?

**KAA:** Bangladesh is the least Anglophonic of the South Asian countries. As such, Bangladeshi English literature certainly lags a bit. I'd say we are, perhaps, where Pakistan was five to ten years ago. But we are also palpably on the cusp of a breakthrough. It won't be a flash in the pan, but will come in as a lasting and enriching dimension to the idiom of South Asian literary expression.

**ELLE:** What are you working on next?

**KAA:** A new novel, possibly a comedy about foodies in New York. Their loves and passions, appetites and misdeeds.



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